



April 26, 2005

Health and learning centre given the \$577 million go-ahead

Groundbreaking approach to Canadian patient care, health education and research

Edmonton... Alberta has committed \$577 million to construct a world-class health and learning facility in Edmonton that will change the way patients are diagnosed and treated and how medical students are trained.

The Health Sciences Ambulatory Learning Centre will provide coordinated diagnostic and specialist services all under one roof while providing unprecedented research and educational opportunities for health sciences students from various faculties in a team-based approach.

This will mean a patient who meets with a specialist and then requires a series of diagnostic tests or consultations with other health professionals will have more timely care and convenient services, often within the same day. In addition, University of Alberta health sciences students will have interdisciplinary education opportunities and graduates will provide more comprehensive and balanced patient care.

"This world-class facility will ensure residents of Edmonton and surrounding area have access to state-of-the-art care, and as a joint-use facility, students from the University of Alberta's health sciences programs will have the benefit of unparalleled learning opportunities," said Dr. Lyle Oberg, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. "Budget 2005 has set in motion an ambitious \$9.2 billion construction plan - ensuring that the infrastructure Alberta needs is in place to support the future growth of our province."

"The clinic-style facility puts the patient first by offering one-stop access to numerous health services and teams of specialists," said Iris Evans, Minister of Health and Wellness. "Patients from Edmonton and northern Alberta will benefit from this innovative team service delivery in one location."

"This exciting new endeavour only furthers our efforts to ensure Alberta's post-secondary system continues its leadership role," said Advanced Education Minister Dave Hancock. "Students will learn leading-edge, patient-focused techniques at a revolutionary facility that is the first of its kind in the country. Alberta is quickly becoming known for its high-quality medical training and the first-rate professionals it produces."

"Over the past few years, Capital Health and the University of Alberta have researched leading health systems around the world to identify the most effective models for combining the best in patient care and health education," said Neil Wilkinson, Capital Health Board Chair. "From the outset our vision for this project has been improved access for patients while integrating the education of university-based health science students into the model."

"The centre gives health science students a valuable team-oriented approach to providing patient care," said Dr. Rod Fraser, President of the University of Alberta. "It will bring about a collaborative atmosphere between disciplines such as nursing, physiotherapy and pharmacy. This innovative approach to teaching will give our students access to the latest health care developments, and it strengthens the University of

Alberta's ability to meet the province's needs for highly educated health care professionals."

Capital Health serves a total of 1.6 million people across central and northern Alberta. Currently, more than 25 per cent of the people who use Capital Health services come from outside the capital region - primarily from central and northern Alberta. The new centre will help address the needs of people coming to the region from long distances to receive care. The clinic-style facility is designed to provide a one-stop healing approach to health service delivered through an integrated clinical practice combined with education and research.

The number of University of Alberta health sciences students benefiting from the enhanced learning opportunities to be offered in the centre is expected to reach 12,000 by 2020. Students from the faculties of medicine and dentistry, rehabilitation medicine, nursing, pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences, physical education and recreation and agriculture, forestry and home economics will graduate having studied in the most advanced interdisciplinary learning environment available. These future health professionals will positively affect patient outcomes as a result of having learned and practised as a team. Students from each health sciences discipline will learn alongside one another to ultimately deliver totally informed and balanced patient care.

Both the University of Alberta and Capital Health anticipate the centre will accelerate the implementation of a variety of unique health reform initiatives. For example, it will demonstrate the effectiveness of more enhanced health professional interdisciplinary teams, working together to deliver better service in an outpatient care setting. The fundamental shift to cross training and multi-tasking in the education and training of physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dentists and rehabilitation therapists will also result in substantial operational cost savings.

The Health Sciences Ambulatory Learning Centre is scheduled to open in 2009.

- 30 -

Media enquiries may be directed to:

Bart Johnson
Director of Communications
Alberta Infrastructure &
Transportation
(780) 415-1841

Mark Kastner
Director of
Communications
Alberta Health and
Wellness
(780) 974-4658

Charlie Fleet
Director, Media Relations
Capital Health
(780) 407-2602

Sandra Halme
Public Affairs
University of Alberta
(780) 492-0442

Michael Shields
Director of Communications
Alberta Advanced Education
(780) 422-4495

Copyright(c); 2005 Government of Alberta

Return to [Government Home Page](#)